

## The Catholic Church and Child Welfare

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By HENRY J. SWIFT, S.J.

In preparing the way for my remarks on "The Catholic Church and Child Welfare," permit me to state at the outset that we Catholics "acknowledge and praise the good done by those of other communions. Did we not believe hopefully and sympathetically in good men and good deeds to be found outside the visible Catholic pale, did we not recognize the workings of the Spirit of God among men not in visible communion with the See of Rome, leading them nearer to that communion, many parts of the civilized world would be, spiritually considered, dismal places to live in." In this connection, I may be permitted to state that, consulting my own little experience in social work, the organization known as the Salvation Army deserves honorable mention for the devotedness which its members show amid unattractive, nay, repugnant surroundings, with few or no worldly considerations to urge them on.

In the first place, therefore, the Catholic Church holds and teaches that there is a radical and essential difference between a child and one of the lower animals; and this radical and essential difference exists between the most insignificant member of the human family and the most naturally clever or the most skilfully trained beast, be it quadruped or quadrupane. The most obvious but by no means the most important difference between human kind and the rest of the visible creation is the existence

and recognition of a theory of right and wrong, or, in other words, a standard of morals. By virtue of the circumstances of his birth, a boy is, say, a subject of the British Empire. He was not consulted about the matter. He ought to *learn* lessons of loyalty, patriotism, self-sacrifice, for King and Country. Therefore, somebody ought to teach him. Having arrived at man's estate, he may, if he sees fit, go beyond the limits of the vast British Empire and change his allegiance. In like manner, a boy born into this world is born subject to the laws of right and wrong, to the standards of morals. He ought to *learn* lessons of upright living; therefore, somebody ought to teach him. But, as the fundamental principles of right and wrong are as far-reaching as the human family itself, it follows that wherever the boy may find himself at any stage of his career, he is always and necessarily subject to those same fundamental principles of right and wrong. He cannot travel beyond their jurisdiction. No act of his can place him outside the sphere of their active application.

Our first principle of moral dependence is that we live in the presence of a Creator, of a God of holiness, before whom all our good works are of themselves as "filthy rags" (*Isaias, lxiv: 6*); rags, indeed, and therefore, *something*, but defiled with innumerable defects. The recognition of this moral dependence is what we understand when we speak of humility. To be broken-spirited and groveling when we fail and to be arrogant and overbearing when we succeed is to act the part of a pagan. The recognition of our moral dependence leads to self-mastery in general and to the control of the sensitive tendencies and appetites. In this respect, the ideals of the ancient cultivated pagans were often low. I suppose

that the worst of all pagans in this or in any other respect would be a paganized Catholic.

As soon as we say that the Catholic is taught to subordinate the present world to the world to come, for which we teach that this world is but a short preparation, there is aroused the opposition of a strong and resourceful party, which we call the kingdom of this world, that looks upon our stand as an insult, a reproach, and an outrage. We simply maintain that our teaching on this point is consistent.

It is the way of paganism to exalt the mighty and to trample upon the weak. Sparta's laws about infanticide were ideal from a pagan point of view. How do his fellows act toward the wounded stag in the forest? What happens to the crippled wolf in the pack? The "thumbs up" and "thumbs down" of the gladiatorial contests of ancient Rome were of a piece with Sparta's legislation and with the polity, so-called, of beasts. Instead of Sparta's wolfish code, we are taught to respect our neighbor's soul, that soul which, in its being and prospects, transcends time and the toil and moil of time. Bodily harm and moral harm, therefore, are both evils, though in different orders; for bodily harm *may* be an injury, while moral harm always is an injury. Bodily harm or hurt may be only transitory; moral harm or hurt is of its nature lasting. A limb may be amputated. There is permanent bodily harm, for the use of the member is lost beyond recovery. If the surgeon is not conscientious, the amputating may be an injury as well as a hurt, because he may operate on some hapless wretch who happens to be in his power.

The ancient cultivated pagan loved the beauty of health, strength, and gracefulness. He loved pleasure,

but not gross, sensual indulgence, for this disfigured his beauty, undermined his health, and sapped his vitality. For him, old age was a sad autumn, death was an unending winter. The further we wander from the ideals of the Gospel, the greater is the danger that we may lapse into the spirit, life, and actions of the ancient pagans, civilized or brutalized.

The welfare of the child, I take it, is not the welfare of a brute beast, nor of a pagan on whom the light of Revelation has not shone or has shone to no purpose, but is the welfare radically of a conscious, responsible being in the reign of grace whose existence barely begins during the period of this natural life. But what is a child? The teaching of the Catholic Church, with which of course her practice as seen in her legislation is in strict conformity, clearly lays it down that as no particular degree of physical or mental development is required to constitute one a subject of one's king, so no particular degree of physical development, much less, of independent existence, is required to constitute a child. Whoever, therefore, directly places the fruit of conception in surroundings in which the vital principle must be surrendered is guilty of feloniously killing a human being. In applying the moral law we do not recognize a substantial difference between those practices which lawyers distinguish as a criminal operation and an abortion. The embryo is in its own place and has a right to remain there. There was a time when Gladstone and Disraeli were living though possibly not recognizable, yet whoever destroyed them would have robbed Great Britain of two statesmen. The Church, therefore, watches over the welfare of the unborn child by forbidding under pain of excommunication whatever might be done directly and primarily to

usher the child into this world before it is able to live here.

All thoughtful people will admit that in protecting the lives of those who cannot fight for their own lives, who cannot protest against the violation of their rights, who cannot even cry out for help when they are being hurried toward the shambles, the Church deserves well of the community. What are euphemistically called "operation houses," a name sufficiently significant to those who have any good reason for knowing what it stands for, have fairly transformed certain parts of the United States. In such matters statistics are, of course, unobtainable; but the fact remains that reputable members of the medical profession deplore the unpardonable facility with which valuable lives are snuffed out by those trained to heal disease and prolong life.

Speaking of statistics in this connection, I wish to enter a solemn protest against the value of certain tables which are called illegitimacy statistics. As far as tabulating the data implied in the title is concerned, the statistics may be flawless; but I object very energetically to any conclusions as to relative morality which may seem to follow from a study of the tables. The foolish and confiding girl may add a unit to the tables and bear up as best she can; to another girl, however, who is neither foolish nor confiding, but who is well versed in "ways that are dark and tricks that are vain," Lady Macbeth's "damned spot" gives no qualms of conscience; she adds no unit to the tables. Yet, which of the two girls is the greater sinner? Which has multiplied sins? Which has wandered further from the right way? Yet, which figures in those miserable statistics? The only safe conclusion derivable from illegitimacy statistics is that cer-

tain young people have been permitted to live. To how many was this gracious favor not accorded? We should have the number of both classes with other data, if we would draw any sound conclusions as to relative morality.

In our foundling asylums there are arrangements by which a child may be left and the fact communicated to those in charge while the carrier has time to retire from observation before anyone goes to the crib prepared for those cases. I know that this custom of ours has been roundly denounced as tending to take from parents their responsibility for the care of their children. The truth is that comparatively few children reach our institutions in this quiet and unostentatious way. Had we no such means of receiving them, the likelihood is that the St. Lawrence would receive them; for the sense of shame, not to mention personal convenience, social exigency, and the like, has steeled the heart of more than one unnatural woman against mother-love for her own helpless little ones. We keep no available detailed records of the parentage of children born out of wedlock for the simple reason that the data either cannot be had or cannot be considered reliable.

The mortality among foundlings is, of course, very high; but the history of each case, if known, would explain fully what we can understand fairly well from the facts within our reach. Owing to diseased, dissolute, or immature parents, to ignorance of elementary hygiene and to exposure, such children enter the race sadly handicapped. The Grey Nuns tell me that, by depending on a specialist and by availing themselves of the latest scientific discoveries, they have been able to add six weeks to the average life of the stray bits of humanity that are brought to them.

Here might arise an important question: How far must the public funds or private philanthropy be employed, as a matter of conscience and not of mere expediency, in prolonging a life that, with every care, is, at best, limited to a few months? We are talking about the life of a human being; it makes no difference, therefore, in the substance of the thing, whether that human being is a fetus, a foundling, a "gassed" soldier, or a grandsire. What about euthanasia: either inside or outside of lying-in establishments? Those who look to natural ethics as their only standard will, presumably, find their answer there; those who are guided in matters of faith and morals by the tenets of some religious organization will find in its approved authors or teachers the direction that they seek.

What is the stand of the Catholic Church in cases such as that of the Bollinger baby, last November in Chicago? The persons concerned were not Catholics, though one of our social workers, Miss Catherine Walsh, had excellent opportunities for studying the case. I quote from her report: "I went to the hospital to beg that the child be taken to its mother. . . . I found the baby alone in a bare room, absolutely nude, its cheek numb from lying in one position, not paralyzed. . . . Both his eyes were open, he waved his little fists and cried lustily. . . . I know if its mother got her eyes on it, she would love it and never permit it to be left to die."

But women are such strange, emotional, sentimental creatures, and just for that reason, you and I, having had women for our mothers, are now enjoying our share of blessings in this world of ours, that we may better quote from the verdict of the six medical specialists who reported on the case: "We believe that a prompt opera-

tion would have prolonged and perhaps saved the life of the child. We find no evidence from the physical defects that the child would have become mentally or morally defective. Several of the physical defects might have been improved by plastic operations." Finally, according to the private declaration of two of the specialists, all six held unanimously that the diagnosis of the physician who took the case and decided the baby should die was positively wrong.

We Catholics believe that it is not for us to fix the degree of mentality or physical beauty that a person must have in order to be permitted to live; we believe that all ordinary means should be used to preserve or prolong the life of any human being. If an infant so comes to us that, in the ordinary course of events, it will remain in some way under Church influence, or associated with the Church, our first care is to baptize it; for we believe that baptism in itself or in some easily understood equivalent, is a part of the Divine plan for our entrance into a happy eternity. We do not believe in baptizing children for whom, if they are to live, there is no hope of future instruction in the belief and practices of the Catholic Church; much less do we believe in baptizing by stealth, as it were, children who, from their non-Catholic family connections, will surely grow up with no Catholic instruction.

I think that I am safe in affirming that the attitude of Catholics as a class towards the tenets of their Church differs, generally speaking, from the attitude of non-Catholics toward the views and practices of the religious organizations with which they are affiliated or are more or less closely connected. For us Catholics, the Church is first, last, and at all times, our teacher in faith and

morals, and we accept it as a part of our religion that the Church is indeed our Divinely appointed and Divinely guided teacher in what we are to believe and what we are to do or leave undone as a matter of conscience. I have not found among my non-Catholic friends any similar feeling toward the religious organizations with which they are closely associated. However, they patronize their churches, contribute very generously to them and to all their social works, and, very especially, they give their time and they *work* for them.

The Catholic ideal does not consist in physical training and mental training and a few general principles about being "good" and not doing "wrong," to the exclusion of definite religious and moral practices which are binding in conscience, because they embody God's will in our regard. If we exalt physical training and neglect all else, we have a lithe and muscular beast; if we exalt mental training and neglect all else, we multiply a man's possibilities for moral evil. No man can be a forger in act until he knows how to write. Polished manners are not necessarily an index to one's regard for right and wrong.

From our point of view, the most essential element in the training of a child is moral training. Physical training is good; mental training is good. Without some instruction in these things, I hold that a child is not properly equipped for the battle of life. But both are immeasurably inferior to moral training, for moral training affects our welfare both in this world and in the next. It is better for me to be a clumsy, illiterate hodcarrier and respect myself and my neighbor's rights than to be a polished bookkeeper whose skill is used to defraud his

employer. Better for me? Yes, and better for my neighbor, better for the body politic.

In what I may call normal conditions, we easily guard the welfare of our Catholic children by explaining to all parents and urging upon them their accountability before God for the proper care of their children. We have Sunday religious services suited to the capacity of children, and we have organizations for them and for young people as well. Our religious Brothers and Sisters are of invaluable help in parish visiting and in looking into cases of temporal and spiritual distress, which they refer to the parish priest if need require it.

Outside of the work done by those wholly dedicated to the service of God, whom we call "religious," we have the Third Order of St. Francis and the St. Vincent de Paul Society, not to mention other associations, whose object is to relieve distress and misery of various kinds by practising the corporal works of mercy and by religious assistance as well. The tendency of the generality of Catholic laymen, however, is, I regret to say, toward contributing funds for social activities without taking an active personal part in them. It would be a great help to their own spiritual progress if they had more first-hand knowledge of the hardships and sufferings borne by many people in any large city. How many good works in this world fail not through lack of money but for want of encouragement and a little personal effort!

As far as possible, we think that children should be kept in their homes, if anything like a home can be provided for them. If a few dollars a month will enable a widowed mother to keep her little brood together, by all means give her the few dollars, for nobody can really replace the mother. Asylums, industrial schools, refuges,

and the like are primarily for those who have no mother, or, at least, no mother worthy of the name; and secondarily, for exceptional and abnormal children. Indeed, we may go further and say that the system of "boarding out" dependent children in private families instead of grouping hundreds of them together under one roof is finding great favor. It is already a well-established practice in parts of the United States and has much to recommend it. To the institution-bred child, "family" and "home" in their dearest senses mean nothing, whereas they, or the memory of them, ought to help him to weather many a gale. Now, by prudent selection, a fairly good substitute for a real home can be placed within the reach of many a homeless youngster. If large city institutions for children have to be kept up, let them be boarding-houses and dormitories; let the children go out to attend the schools in the neighborhood, rather than remain cooped up as if they were of a distinct species.

The work of our Sisters who visit and nurse the sick poor in their homes are well enough known to require no mention on the score of novelty. Two sisterhoods, the Nardines and the Sisters of St. Joseph, have made a special study of the deaf-mute problem, which, as every worker knows, is one of peculiar difficulty. Those dwellers in that strange world of absolute silence have their own trials, and are particularly exposed to adverse influences when they are away from their own homes and housed in Government institutions. They seem to be peculiarly susceptible to unfavorable impressions which are lasting in their effects.

With regard to settlement work, I think that, at least in the United States, we are far behind Protestants. In fact, we often view that work with unfriendly and jeal-

ous eyes; for, from the circumstances in which it is sometimes carried on, we see in it only a thinly disguised attempt to win from us some of our unsophisticated foreign-born Catholics. There is in New York City a chapel subject to the control of a denomination which does not recognize the order or office of bishop and conducts its own services in the simplest manner; yet in this chapel, they use candles, incense, and gorgeous robes. The congregation is made up of foreigners.

Let me not be understood as saying that we do not value settlement work and therefore pass it over lightly, if we do not neglect it. Rather, while we see its importance, our available funds are employed in other ways that may seem more attractive and desirable. Take for example grand church buildings, for which we have a "powerful weakness." The mere maintenance of them means a very heavy bill of expense. Now, while all believers in the existence and power of Almighty God quite agree that He has sovereign claims upon our praise, adoration, and gratitude, there is room for a variety of opinions as to how, in certain circumstances of time, place, and people, we may best express those sentiments. The social value and importance of small, inexpensive church buildings scattered about freely, almost prodigally, for the convenience of the people, seems to have been grasped particularly by the Methodists, whose enterprising activity in opening chapels in outlying districts is a striking feature of their work.

One of the prominent departments of settlement work is the day nursery, to which we give no little attention, even though we fall short of what Protestants aim at and realize in their multiplied activities. Sewing societies, which make or remodel or repair clothing for the

poor, are not peculiar to us; but we have here in Montreal a society which makes up infants' outfits for those babies whose prospective mothers are too poor to prepare them.

How could one speak of child welfare without saying a word about schooling? Up to about a century ago, all our United States common schools were religious schools inasmuch as religious exercises and instruction formed a part of the school day. At that time, Catholics were an insignificant and quite negligible part of the population, but as immigration increased their numbers and influence, they began to object to Protestant religious exercises in a common school. Our so-called "neutral" schools then came into being. As we look upon religious instruction as an important element in the welfare of the child, we have to a considerable extent set up our private religious schools, in which, at present, upwards of two million Catholic children are taught without expense to the American Government. As the supporters of private schools are in no case released from the payment of the tax for the upkeep of the public school, it is plain that Catholics thus give a practical proof of the sincerity of their attachment to religious education. The advisability of imparting religious instruction along with secular knowledge is maintained by Catholics generally, by Lutherans to a considerable extent, and by not a few Anglicans.

Coming home, or rather, pausing on our own doorstep, we note that Quebec is the only province of the Dominion of Canada that is now without a compulsory school law. This looks bad on paper, but the reality is less alarming; for, as a matter of fact, the latest available statistics show that 75½% of the Catholic children

of the province of Quebec are enrolled in the schools, and that almost 76% of the Protestant children in the province are similarly favored. I think this speaks well for Quebec with its large and constantly increasing rural population, especially as in the adjoining province of Ontario, whose rural population is gradually falling off, only 64% of the children of school age were registered in any school. And this, mark you, in a province which makes school attendance compulsory.

The same statistics tell us that for the period 1901-1911, Quebec lessened her percentage of illiterates by 5.05%; while during the same ten years, Ontario lessened hers by only 2.24%. In other words, compulsory schooling and prohibition are alike in this sense: It depends upon the local sentiment whether prohibition prohibits and whether compulsory education laws are enforced. We may even press the point and remark that compulsory education does not make for respect for the law; since Quebec with 26.21% of the population of the Dominion has only 16.73% of the crime, while Ontario with 32.53% of the population has 41.66% of the crime.

It stands to reason that, compared with the offspring of poor foreigners in our large cities, children born of native white parents are born in more sanitary, more hygienic, and more refined surroundings. But money and comfort are not everything to the infant, for United States statistics show a higher death-rate among children of native parents in New York and Boston than among children of foreign parents in the same two great cities. As mother love may be a fair substitute for science, so the mother's careless indifference may nullify all the efforts of science.

Wherever there are many foreigners, we have our

night classes in which they may learn the language of the country and, above all, they may refresh their memory of the elements of their religious belief; for, I repeat it, we set much more store by religious belief and practice than we do by any mere secular knowledge.

Finally, in preparing a boy for a life of usefulness, it is well to remember that we do not live in a pure aristocracy, nor is such a state of affairs possible. We think that the various trades and crafts are adjuncts to the well-being of the commonwealth, and that they are honorable and lucrative. It is not desirable to multiply the number of indifferent typists and stenographers when the plane and the scythe are growing rusty from disuse. The tendency of the population to gravitate toward the large cities is an evil tendency whenever it is at all general. The Most Reverend Archbishop of Toronto is decidedly of the opinion that the solid wealth of Canada is in the rural districts, though he tells me that perhaps it will take a quarter of a century to bring about the acceptance of his view. He is, therefore, very much in earnest in so enhancing the attractiveness, or lessening the unattractiveness, of rural life as to keep country children in the country; for experience has demonstrated that city children, after some years of city life, are restless, dissatisfied, and prone to wander, if brought face to face with rural conditions, which to them seem very tame, uninteresting, and commonplace. Yet, in the country, the food is more wholesome, the sleep is more refreshing, and the nervous system is in better order. Life in the city is too much like a "forced draught" life. Happy he who knows only the country, at least until well on toward man's estate.

Yes, I am old-fashioned enough to think that such a

thing as a foolish tendency to over-education is possible, and that it has a harmful effect upon social conditions. Think of taking Indian youths from their reservation to the East, and there teaching them all that concerns our complex city life, and then sending them back to their reservation where their ancestral habits are followed closely. I do not believe that mere book learning is a panacea for all our social ailments. It is not possible, and if it were, it is not desirable from an economic standpoint that all young people should be equally educated to a high standard. Yet, all should be so educated as to be useful members of the commonwealth, a result which, it seems to me, can be achieved more successfully and at much smaller outlay by having in view the student's future field of usefulness. In a word, vocational training has presented itself, has bowed deferentially, and has expressed a wish to be of use; and I think it has come to stay.

In the days of stage coaches, it is said that a distinguished Continental professor, having signified his intention of visiting Oxford, the students determined to impress upon the visitor a proper notion of the greatness and far-reaching influence of that venerable seat of learning. Imagine the wonderment of the learned foreigner when, as he neared Oxford, he heard the stable boys and other menials talk Latin glibly and crack Greek jokes. He asked for explanations. He got them. Some of the pretended servants gravely informed him that thanks to Oxford's literary influence, every yokel within thirty miles of the university could converse in Latin, and many of them took Cicero for light reading while they were pulling at their post-prandial pipe. To turn a furrow, a knowledge of Latin is not necessary; and fur-

rows must be turned. The proper training of girls is subject to the same comments and restrictions. While it is good for a girl to know how to do tatting and to crochet, every girl ought to know how to knit and darn.

The striking feature of city life is its artificiality. Food, clothing, shelter, means of conveyance, amusements: all seem to be a flight from mother nature, and a long flight, too. There is in New York City a society for the purpose of furnishing an occasional summer lunch of fresh green grass to city horses which never see a meadow; and there is also a society for providing city horses with a holiday in the country, away from the hot, hard pavements. A few days in the country! That is my last thought about child welfare, as far as city children are concerned. By all means, let them have those few days in the country. It is good for body and soul, for it is something remembered for a whole season. Perhaps the most enjoyable part for those who have made the trip possible is the variety of comment elicited from the little guests by the novel surroundings. In the rural districts, child welfare is not the problem that it is in cities; the welfare of the city child will be less a problem the more the city child can experience of the country. It ought to be unlawful to have orphanages and refuges in big cities.

By insisting upon surroundings and treatment best suited to develop bodily fitness, I do not wish to stop at the degree of perfection that can be aimed at and reached in raising domestic animals; for we can always hold these in effective subjection, while in the human family there are elements so elusive, so incapable of effective control, and at the same time so whimsical, that they mock at the philosopher's theories and defy the martinet's dis-

cipline. For example, after studying all the lasting advantages for body and soul which accrue to me through the practice of temperance in food and drink, I may deliberately choose gluttony and dissipation with the satisfaction that they give for the time being. If conscience does not control our thoughts, words, and actions, no laws of dietetics or hygiene will control us. Whatever one's education may be, whatever one's social standing may be, the Church teaches us that one's first care should be to have "a pure heart and a good conscience," as St. Paul says to Timothy (*I Tim.* 1:5), and that physical excellence or mental superiority gained by the sacrifice or defilement of conscience is more worthless than Dead Sea fruit.

## The Practical Aims of the Catholic Alumnae Federation

BY RICHARD H. TIERNEY, S.J.

*An Address Delivered in Chicago, Nov. 28, 1915, at the  
Second Annual Convention of the International  
Federation of Catholic Alumnae*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

YOU have asked me to speak about the aim of this association. Much to my pleasure, I have been connected with the Federation more or less closely since its inception, and I know from its spirit and from its constitution, which after all is but an outward sign of its inward spirit, that its great aim, the one that is pre-eminent beyond all other, is an aim that women cherish with intense love, namely, the conservation of the ideals of true womanhood. A woman's society could not have a loftier purpose, a more noble end. Quite naturally, the sphere of work in which women will strive to achieve this purpose will be three-fold, the home, the State and the Church.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, women are naturally and primarily destined for the home. Their gifts and their capacities have been given them for the upbuilding and preservation of the home. Their instincts are continually impelling them to that end. Anything that distracts them from it is either entirely unnatural, such as our abominable economic conditions, or entirely supernatural, such as the Divine impulse that impels them to sacrifice the joys of life that they may give themselves to the more

exalted service of the Master. This work in the home is a work of the vastest importance, not only for our nation, but for every nation on the face of the earth. For mark it well, the home is the unit of society. On the home the nation is built. Corrupt the home and you corrupt the commonwealth: destroy the home and you destroy the commonwealth. It is not in the forum nor yet in the marketplace that citizens are formed; it is at the hearthstone. There is held up before the expectant eyes of the children all that is high and holy in aspiration, that they may be impelled thereby to go forth to the battle of life perfect after the image of Him who was the most perfect of men, Jesus Christ.

This work of the formation of the children falls principally to the mother. The child is given to her body and soul, that she may make of it a vessel of election or a vessel of dishonor. Into this little heart she breathes her spirit, and if that spirit be strong and exalted, so shall the child's spirit be strong and exalted. If on the other hand, that spirit be low and base, so shall the child's spirit be low and base, and the youth will descend into the arena of life a groveling thing, a coward thing, with heroes all about it to shame it and to shame its mother. The home, therefore, is the first place in which the ideals of Christian womanhood are to be upheld. From the home these ideals are to spread to the nation. Think not, Ladies, that this is a slight or an ephemeral work. There is nothing more precious; it is as precious as the immortal soul itself. There is nothing more lasting, because the influence of the mother goes down to her children and even to her children's children.

There sits on the seashore in a far-away country a strange couple; they are looking longingly over the blue

waves to a distant land; one is an old woman; her face is worn with sorrow and her cheeks are furrowed with tears, but the halo of sanctity is around her head. The other is a strong man, strong not only in strength of body but in strength of soul. Monica and Augustine are sitting on the seashore looking across the waves at their distant home; saintly Monica had followed after her wayward son as he trod the way of sin, until at last the mother's soul overpowered the son's soul, and the dying Monica is leaving a saint behind her, made under God by her, a woman. Augustine, the saint, lived for long years and his mother's influence lived in him, to influence the world with love of God even unto this day, for Augustine still lives, his influence is still with us, and Augustine in living to this time is keeping alive the spirit of Monica, a mother. Such is a mother's power, such her work. So it is throughout the world. There is scarcely a man, howsoever base, who does not cherish some memory of his mother. Many a time when the priest, weary with his work and saddened by the scenes about him, ascends the altar and offers up the Holy Sacrifice in sorrow, wondering whither God will lead him, there seems to appear above him the smiling face of his old mother, who bids him take courage, and press on manfully. Her influence lives in him, her power for good is given him and he goes forth strong, to battle for righteousness. This is the ideal of a true woman; this the ideal that you are to preserve; this the ideal that you are to illustrate by your example, by your word and by your action.

But he would be a narrow man who would confine women entirely to the home, and this would be a narrow society if it bade women never leave the home, never

extend their influence beyond the home. You have civic rights and you defend them well. You have civic duties and you perform them well. Later on perchance the different commonwealths will give to all of you some new privilege, and it is to be hoped that you will use it well. Then one of the functions of this society, I take it, will be to adapt new conditions to old doctrines. When these new privileges come to women, a new order will arise, new problems will be born; there will be a clashing of new principles with old principles, a conflict perhaps between new and old doctrines. In such an emergency it is for a society of this kind, a society of cultured, educated and upstanding women, to whom God is all, to show the world that the new privilege can be used without detriment to the old virtues.

This, then, is another one of your ideals. But in striving to show to the world that these new privileges can be used without detriment to the old virtues, bear in mind that paradoxical as it may seem, woman becomes equal to man by remaining superior to man, and that woman's strength is in her very weakness. It is woman's tenderness, woman's gift of sympathy, woman's cultured reserve that conquer men. For woman to cultivate masculine traits and then pit herself against man, were midsummer night's madness: in that way her cause is lost. Hesitate to go down into the pit of politics lest perchance you come forth begrimed with dust and find your influence lost.

I say, therefore, that he would be a narrow man who would not grant that women will have a perfect right to use legitimate privileges granted by the State. But in the flush of a new joy there is danger that accentuation may be put in the wrong place. Let new privileges be

far greater than your fondest dreams, yet it will remain true that there is scarcely a social problem that cannot be solved through the home. Which of the problems now vexing the State and which of the great evils that are harassing our intellects and teasing our wills, which one, I ask you, is not ultimately solved in the home? Is it divorce? Do you think that if every mother in this fair land were to upbuild the temple of God in the soul of her daughter, and teach her the sanctity of marriage and the priceless value of purity that the divorce mill would grind so madly? Do you think, if every mother in this land would teach her son that woman is sacred unto God, that the divorce mill would grind so madly? Is the problem that is vexing you an economic one? Is it the wretched selfishness which has come into the open from the home, and like a lawless thing, caring nothing for human rights or human dignity, is sacrificing everything to its own base gain? That problem can be solved in the home only. Before a solution can be reached mothers must teach their daughters unselfishness and economy, must instil into their sons the idea that human rights are above pleasures, that mercy is above money, that justice is better than fame. In this ultimately lies the remedy for the great economic evil, and this is the work of the home, not of legislation. The mothers of our land should remember that civic privileges are useless unless supported by good homes.

There is a third sphere in which you are to show the ideals of true womanhood, and that is in the Church. Woman has a place in the Church; a place more important than many of us realize; and the Church has done much for woman, a fact not often fully appreciated. If you wish to know how much she has done, compare

the condition of women in pagan times with the condition of women in Christian countries. The Church has not accomplished this work by force of arms. There was no blood spilt in the conflict. She has done it by the quiet exaltation of womanhood, by putting the Blessed Virgin by the side of her Divine Son, and bidding man kneel down before the altar and lift up his heart in praise of her. She has done it by raising innumerable women to the altar and erecting churches in their honor. She has done it by proclaiming the doctrine that before the face of God woman is essentially equal to man, a creature, to be respected and sanctified in the same way as man, to enjoy the same blessed gifts of the Beatific Vision.

And, as I have said, woman has done nobly in striving as far as possible to repay the Church. This is true of American women as well as of women of other nations. Our convents, our orphan asylums and our schools are eloquent testimony to woman's grateful effort. Women too, are responsible in large measure for our churches and for the success of our missionary societies. They have given themselves heart and soul, more than men, to Catholic idealism. To them we give credit; we acknowledge our debt; their work has been great. But, it can be greater. There is a vast amount still to be done. There is constructive work of all kinds; work in the purification of the theater, which today is exploiting womanhood in a most dreadful fashion; work in the purification of literature, which is doing the same thing; work among our immigrants, among our poor. There are a thousand ways in which this association can reach out its arms and put them around the little children in order to protect them from the evils that are eating into the vitals of this country like a canker into a fair flower.

Here then is my idea of what your association can accomplish. It can accomplish above all this one great thing: it can preserve the ideals of the Catholic home; it can lift up its voice, it can bring every legitimate power within its sphere to bear upon the evils that are making inroads into our homes; it can cry out against worldliness and combat divorce; it can stand before the face of legislators and demand that they do justice to the family, to the workmen, to the needy. In the State there are a thousand ways in which you can do well, and in the Church there are ten thousand ways in which you can do better.

This is no slight task; but it is imposed upon you now in a special way. You have come together into a great Federation, have put yourselves publicly before this country as an association that stands for Catholic ideals, and it were a base thing indeed that this association should be untrue to its great aim; and it were a base thing too that any integral part of the association should be untrue to the high mission given to it by God. You have put an obligation upon yourselves, and this obligation will require individual sacrifices; it will require corporate sacrifice. But there is no one so base as to think that any member of this great Federation, that any society forming this great Federation, will refuse to make sacrifices for the common cause, forgetting enmity, forgetting personal aggrandisement, looking forward only to the consummation of the one great aim, which is to promote the ideal of Christian womanhood.

And in the end, Ladies, when you have done this work, the ships of Tharsis will be passing and you will be standing on the summit of the hill of life, but for an instant only, for soon you will begin the descent to the other side with this glad thought in your heart, that you

have done your best to promote the great aim of the International Federation of Catholic Alumnae, namely, the preservation and the spread of Christian idealism through Christian womanhood.

### Is Suicide Lawful?

BY ERNEST R. HULL, S.J.

**A** CORRESPONDENT writes to the *Bombay Examiner*:

Sir:—*Re* the famous (or infamous) lines from "Barrack Room Ballads" (by Kipling) :

When you're wounded and lying on Afghanistan's plains  
And the women come out to cut up what remains,  
Just roll to your rifle, and blow out your brains  
And go to your God like a soldier.

Has any leading Catholic opinion ever been given with regard to this piece of philosophy, if I may call it such? I can assure you that there are men now who would "roll to their rifles and blow out their brains" did the necessity arise. In fact it has already been done, as you know. Would you kindly give us some advice with regard to this, as I have heard every view, except the Catholic one, very cleverly expounded at different times.

Yours, etc.

(Signed.)

The practice of suicide seems to have gone through several phases in human history. First comes the purely natural and unsophisticated instinct of self-preservation, the love of life no matter what evils may attend it. Then comes the idea, arising from a noble instinct, of sacrificing one's own life for sake of others, for the saving of

one's family or friends or country, of which we have some signal instances in early Roman history. Then, as civilization grows artificial there arises a keen, proud sense of honor which leads to abuse. Thus in the corrupt later times of the Roman Empire it was quite an ordinary thing for a man to commit suicide, either because he has suffered disgrace, or in order to avoid disgrace which is impending.

Christianity rectified this crooked idea by emphasizing the principle that a man's life was not his own, but was a thing given to him in trust by God; and therefore it was not to be done away with at will. Christianity still approved of self-sacrifice in the interests of justice and right, where such self-sacrifice was calculated to bring benefit upon a noble or just cause. But such self-sacrifice was not suicide; it was the willing acceptance of death from others in the act of championing the right.

In consequence of Christian teaching, suicide in medieval Christendom was an extremely rare thing, and one which, when it did occur, was looked upon with horror as a deadly crime.

The revival of pagan ideals through the Renaissance brought suicide to the fore again, as one of the expedients of a "great soul" to avoid disgrace, dishonor or disaster; and in proportion as belief in God and the ethical principles of Christianity have declined, so in proportion has suicide increased. Moreover, on account of the fact that every instance is now reported in the newspapers, people have got quite used to it. Suicide has become quite an ordinary expedient and resource for any one who finds himself in a quandary. If an officer in the army suffers a defeat, or a statesman finds himself confronted with failure or disgrace, or a manager or

cashier has defalcated and is on the point of being found out; or if any one suffers a financial loss, or the bereavement of a wife or child; or even if a man is in ill-health or pain or depression of mind, there is always one obvious way out of it; either to blow one's brains out, or take arsenic, or cut one's throat, or hang oneself with a halter, or throw oneself into a well. Then the police are called in, and an inquest is held, and everybody says, "How sad!" ; and all is over.

Is suicide of this kind an act of bravery or an act of cowardice? In one sense it is an act of bravery, that a man should have the courage to proceed so violently against himself, overriding the instinct of self-preservation and love of life. But on the other hand it is an act of cowardice, because it means shirking the hardships of life instead of facing them bravely like a man. Even as an act of bravery it is a virtue misplaced, and applied to a wrong object. But in any case one thing is certain. There still survives among right-thinking mankind a deep conviction that suicide is an essentially unreasonable act. This is conclusively proved by the strenuous endeavors made at every inquest to bring in a verdict of "temporary insanity," the implication being that so long as a man is of sound mind he will never dream of such an act.

Suicide is essentially immoral. We can admire all instances in which a man exposes himself to certain death in order to save the life or honor of some other person, or to promote the well-being of his family or country, or to stand up for his religion. But this does not mean suicide; it does not mean killing oneself, but accepting death from another. Suicide is the deliberate taking away of one's own life, or assuming to oneself that dominion over life and death which belongs properly to

God alone. And no matter what the motive, this is never allowed. Hence the sentiment quoted in the verses of Kipling must be condemned as pure and simple paganism, and a total contravention of the elements of the moral law.

## Can He Afford to Marry?

BY FRANCIS J. YEALY, S.J.

SOME time ago a young Catholic gentleman was asked why he did not marry. He was drawing a very good salary and seemed altogether an eligible candidate. His reply, however, was simply that he could not afford to marry. Some time later I had occasion to mention this incident and was told that the same thing had been said by other prosperous Catholic men. Indeed, this attitude seems to have become rather typical of well-to-do young Catholics as a class.

Now, of course, the high cost of marriage has become proverbial, in fact, a venerable joke, and I am well aware that there are young men who cannot afford to marry. But the curious thing is, that these are the very fellows who make the venture. They do very often find their life a struggle, but somehow or other they manage to get along and live happily. Hence the complaint of their more prosperous brothers would at first seem a trifle insincere.

The complaint, we are told, is not without good foundation. How can a young man even if prosperous, or rather especially if prosperous, do otherwise than balk at

marriage? Think of the extravagance of the young ladies of his own social plane. Can he summon up courage to keep company with a girl, his social equal, when he learns the size of her expense account? Hardly. The first test applied to him is, "Does he own an auto?" Strong, sterling manhood is stringently required of him, but this is only a minor qualification. He must make frequent and tasteful gifts of expensive confectionery and flowers. He must entertain regally at theater and restaurant, and country club. He must show a record of consistent social brilliancy. Lastly, alas for the bank account! he must dress irreproachably. These, let us not forget, are the prerequisites of the courtship. What than shall the demands of marriage be?

That this state of affairs exists must, I think, be admitted. True, many Catholic girls are superior to such folly. But many others are quite as exacting with their suitors as are young ladies outside our Faith. And even when the girl wants to be wholly reasonable, it takes real courage to ask her to leave the comforts of a wealthy home and live, to say the least, on a more modest income.

So much for the young ladies. But is personal extravagance wholly unknown to the male sex? Your young society-man smiles at the expensive vanities of his younger sister, but he has darling follies of his own. Run over his clothier's bill, check up his club account, picture that long list of unitemized expenditures, tie clasps, tobacco, taxi fares. These, of course, are all *necessities*, as are the purchases of the lady. But they cannot be ascribed to the demands of courtship. They represent money spent simply and solely on self.

And right here we have the source of the whole difficulty. Selfishness is, of course, one of those beautifully

universal faults that can carry the blame for every evil under the sun. But here the causality is more than ordinarily evident. Our young man begins adult life with only a vague and remote intention of marriage; for social and professional success his desire is earnest and intimate. He wishes to have a good income and get good returns for it. He wishes to be prompt and proper in his attire. He wishes to be prominent in fashionable clubs. He wishes to dine well and dance well and see good "shows." He wishes to read the latest books and be a clever talker. He wishes to be admired. He keeps company, of course, but with vague intentions. It is only a part of the social game. As he grows older, marriage does become a natural prospect. By this time he has acquired a settled desire for a life artistically complete in its externals. He would like to have a wife and a home, but these involve compromises. If he can marry without taking in his horns, he will marry. If he can marry and still be the clever, dashing fellow, still receive the multitude's adulation, then he will marry. But to modify or abandon that artistic ideal, to descend from his pedestal to wear the sackcloth and ashes of domesticity, that is another question. If he has to spend his money cautiously, prune his tailor's bills, drop a few of his clubs and settle down to the simple life, marriage, he thinks, is not a consummation devoutly to be wished.

Plainly, the trouble with our young friend is that he is selfish, unspeakably selfish. Truly he cannot afford to marry and remain selfish. Marriage, if it is to be more than a mockery, demands sacrifice and humility. But in the modern whirl of artificiality, these virtues have small chance for play. Consequently our young man takes no thought of giving supreme expression to his

manhood by loving and striving and struggling to make a family happy. He only wonders whether he can have a happy family without foregoing the poor vanities of his later boyhood. He does not really love, he calculates. If all this were not strangling inherent nobilities in our young men, if it were not an actual menace to society, if it were not helping to make our attitude toward one of Christ's holy Sacraments merely a sociological problem, then I should have nothing to say about it. But since it is doing all this, the occasion calls for speech.

Yet the situation leaves much room for hope. These young men can afford to approach marriage cautiously; but caution does not mean indefinite delay. They are facing a problem that is really difficult. But they are by supposition men of initiative and resource. And have they no resource but bribery when they want to win a lady's heart and hand?

One word more about the girl's extravagance. Does it not seem that when he has really won her love, the example of the husband's economy and self-sacrifice will raise any worthy Catholic wife above her foolish extravagance? I think it will, and I think our Catholic young men should regard the problem in this light. Pray, I would tell them, to be guided to a virtuous wife. But do not be so vain as to ask all and give nothing. Do not be so vain as to pray merely for a woman whom you can love. Pray with humble heart for a great soul who can love you.